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W.H.O. WARNS AGAINST USE OF IVERMECTIN TO TREAT COVID

The World Health Organization on Tuesday said using the antiparasitic drug to treat Covid-19 infection is not safe

SAFETY, EFFICACY DOUBTFUL: CHIEF SCIENTIST

"Safety and efficacy are important when using any drug for a new indication. WHO recommends against use of 'ivermectin' for Covid-19 except within clinical trials," Dr Soumya Swaminathan, WHO's chief scientist, tweeted. The drug's manufacturer Merck & Co, too, had issued a statement earlier saying there's no clinical proof that it can fight the virus

BUT GOVT SAYS IT WILL CURE MILD CASES

- WHO's warning came a day after Goa approved the use of ivermectin as preventive treatment for all adults against Covid
- This medicine had recently been included in the Union Health Ministry's revised national Covid treatment protocol as a possible treatment option for people with mild disease

TWO

THIS IS THE 2ND WARNING BY W.H.O. AGAINST IVERMECTIN IN PAST 2 MONTHS

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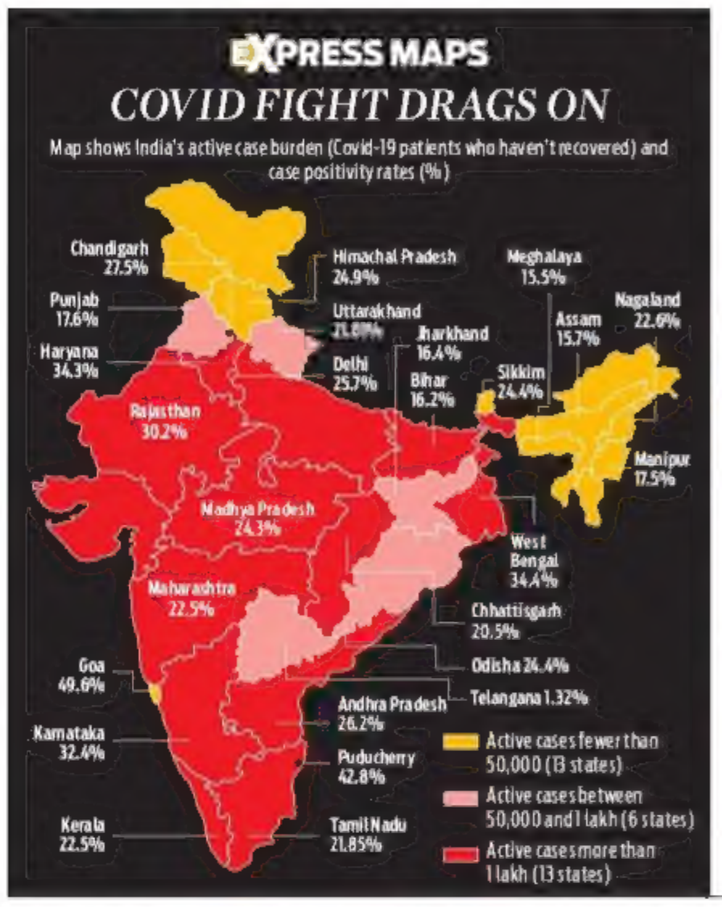

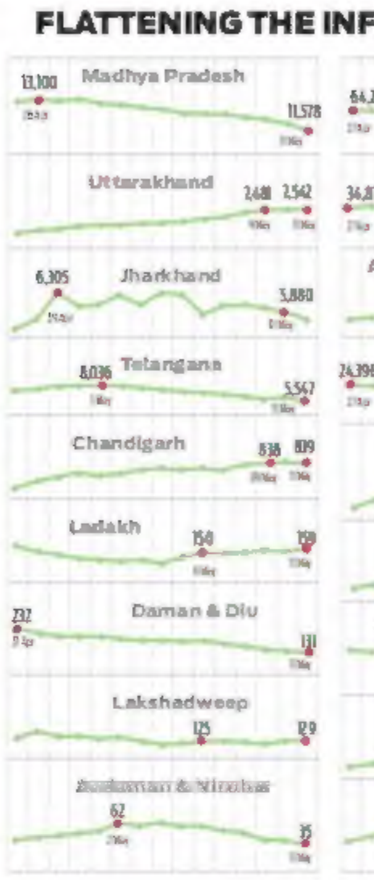

COVID PATIENTS STAYING TOO LONG IN HOSPITALS SHOULD GO HOME: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister B S Yediyurappa on Tuesday raised concerns over Covid-19 patients continuing to occupy hospital beds for more than 20 days 'unnecessarily' against doctors' advice.

In an appeal, the CM said those continuing to stay in hospitals are denying beds to patients who need them more urgently. He said it was time for them to go home and continue their treatment, if required, so more critical care patients can avail beds. "As of today, 6,500 patients have been in hospital for 1-10 days, 1,900 for 11-20 days, 503 patients are in hospital for more than 20 days and 337 for more than 30 days. What is the need for 337 patients to stay in hospitals for more than a month? Despite doctors' suggesting that they get discharged, they are refusing to do so and are occupying beds that can be used for patients who need them more," he said, surprised with the number of people overstaying in hospitals. P4

FROM ACROSS THE STATE

5,87,452
ACTIVE CASES

33.99% Positivity Rate

1,16,238 Samples tested on Saturday

1,07,59,572 Total vaccine doses administered so far

The State Government will provide free food through Indira Canteens to people from economically weaker sections across the state during the lockdown till May 24

Sandalwood star 'Kichcha' Sudeep to help the families of the 24 Covid patients, who died due to oxygen shortage at the Chamarajanagar district hospital, through his Kichcha Sudeep Charitable Trust

16 states and 42% of districts in the country continue to show Covid surge; national test positivity rate at 21%

BIG DIP IN ACTIVE CASES FOR THE FIRST TIME; PLATEAUING OR DECLINING IN 18 STATES

Covid-19 vaccine being administered to a woman in the 18-44 age group at CV Raman Hospital in Bengaluru on Tuesday | SHRIRAM BN

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Covid-19 situation in at least some states may be showing some signs of improvement despite 42% of the total districts in India — 310 out of 734 — still experiencing runaway infections, data presented by the Centre on Tuesday showed.

Eighteen states in India, including Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan and Haryana, are showing a decline or plateauing of cases, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said in a press briefing.

The glimmer of hope came on a day when the active coronavirus cases dropped by over 30,000 for the first time in over two months. However, 16 states continue to show a surge, pointed out Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary in the Health Ministry.

While the country's test positivity rate remains a staggering 21%, positivity rates in as many as 310 districts are above the national average.

Underscoring the need to enhance testing in order to curb the pandemic in rural areas, the government announced that rapid antigen tests (RAT) will now be allowed at all government and private health facilities. Also, RAT kits approved by renowned global agencies will not need separate validation in India.

As of now, said ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava, RT-PCR testing capacity in the country is 16 lakh per day while 17 lakh RATs can be conducted every day. Bhargava also said home-based testing solutions are being explored and plans are afoot to set up RAT booths within schools, colleges, community centres, RWA offices among others.

The Centre, meanwhile, applauded the Covid containment models adopted by Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra, suggesting their replication at the national level. "The decentralized approach Mumbai has adopted in Covid-19 containment needs to be adopted at the national level," said Agarwal.

"We have observed that strict measures like restrictions on mass gatherings and on intermingling of people along with closing of non-essential activities for 15 days reduce the rate of growth and cases start plateauing," he said.

Cadila's Virafin priced at ₹11,995 per dose

Zydus Cadila's Virafin, which recently received emergency use approval for treating moderate Covid cases, has been priced at ₹11,995 per dose. Virafin is a single-dose therapy that can reduce the need for oxygen support, the company claimed

Govt affidavit shows low May stock for 18+

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

ONLY about 2 crore Covid-19 vaccine doses may be available for the 18-44-year age group across India this month, an affidavit filed by the Centre in the Supreme Court revealed.

In other words, just one dose is available for 30 beneficiaries, since the population of this age group in India is about 60 crore. It explains why people are finding it difficult to book their vaccination slots this month.

The affidavit shows that 1.5 crore doses of Covishield and 50 lakh doses of Covaxin are available in May for "other than Government of India channel". Under the Centre's decentralised and liberalised vaccination policy, which came into effect on May 1, it will procure 50% of the total Covid vaccine supplies directly, which will then be shared with states to inoculate the population over 45 years of age.

Fifty per cent of the supplies, however, will have to be procured directly by states and private hospitals, which can then be used to administer shots to the 18-44-year age group, under the revised vaccination strategy.

The document shows that the highest allocation — of about 34.38 lakh vaccine doses — have been made for Uttar Pradesh, followed by Maharashtra (over 18 lakh) and Bihar (about 16 lakh).

Officials in the Union Health Ministry said that the allocations under this category had been worked out on a state-wise population of 18-44 years pro rata and it had already been conveyed to the state at the end of April.

CONTINUED ON: P10

K'taka to float global tender for two crore vaccine doses: DyCM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

WITH Karnataka facing a severe shortage of vaccine, the State Government has decided to float a global tender to procure two crore doses and facilitate vaccination of those in the 18-44-year age group

The State Covid Task Force, headed by Deputy Chief Minister **Dr C N Ashwath Narayan**, on Tuesday decided to procure vaccine through global tenders like many other states, including Maharashtra. "It has been decided to float the tender and complete the process within seven days," the Deputy CM told reporters after the task force meeting.

The state is currently dependent on vaccines supplied by the Union Government. As of Tuesday, around 22.39 lakh people have got both the doses and around 65 lakh received the first dose and are waiting to get the second dose of the vaccine. Those in the 18-44 age group are also finding it very difficult to get the vaccine.

The DyCM said that apart from global tenders to procure vaccines, an order has been placed for three crore doses, which include one crore of Covaxin and two crore of Covishield. "There is a huge demand for the vaccines in the country and probably, in the next one or two months, we too will be able to produce 20 crore doses of vaccine. Now, there is a lot of anxiety among people. To meet the demand, we are looking at all available sources to procure vaccines," he said. "We have invited the tenders and vaccines approved by the regulatory bodies will be considered," he added. P5

BIZ ACTIVITY DROPS TO LAST JUNE LEVELS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

WITH almost the entire country in the grip of localised lockdowns, India's business activity has shrunk to levels last seen in June 2020, according to Japanese brokerage Nomura. The Nomura India Business Resumption Index (NIBRI), which tracks business activity on a weekly basis, fell sharply to 64.5 for the week ended May 9 from 69.7 a week ago. This is 35% below pre-pandemic levels.

"The sharp drop in NIBRI suggests that the rolling statewide lockdowns are hurting sequential growth. International experiences suggest the correlation between mobility and gross domestic product (GDP) growth is much weaker during the second wave, due to more targeted restrictions and more pandemic-adept consumers and businesses," said Sonal Varma and Aurodeep Nandi, economists, Nomura.

The fall is driven by a sharp decline in mobility due to coronavirus-induced lockdowns and it portends a bleak outlook for the economy. However, Nomura cautions that the drop in mobility 'exaggerates' the hit to economic activity. "International experiences suggest the correlation between mobility and GDP growth is weaker during the second wave, due to more targeted restrictions and more pandemic-adept consumers and businesses," said Sonal Varma and Aurodeep Nandi, economists, Nomura.

Although the Centre has said it will not impose a blanket lockdown, most states are already under some kind of a lockdown. If localised restrictions continue for another month, economists warn of further risks to GDP growth.

SECOND QUARTER TO BE CHALLENGING

Nomura has lowered GDP growth forecast for 2021 to 9.8% from 11.5% (for FY22, to 10.8% from 12.6%). "We expect a localised hit in the 2nd quarter and believe medium-term tailwinds (vaccine pivot, global recovery, easy financial conditions) remain intact," it said

NATIONWIDE	MAY 10	MAY 11
Fresh cases	3,66,161	3,29,942
Recoveries	3,53,818	3,56,082
Deaths	3,754	3,876

JAB-O-METER

TAKE YOUR SHOT

May 10 **24,30,017 doses**

May 11 **23,85,092 doses**

TOTAL: 17,51,71,482

30.4 LAKH ACROSS 30 STATES/UTS IN THE 18-44 AGE GROUP GOT JABS SO FAR

STATEWIDE	MAY 10	MAY 11
Fresh cases	39,305	39,510
Recoveries	32,188	22,584
Deaths	596	480

INT'L NURSES DAY

Nurses take the pandemic battle head on

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

LAKSHMIDEVAMMA is 26 years old and the mother of a three-year-old toddler. A nurse with the BBMP, she has vaccinated more than 2,000 people since March at the public health centre in Sultanpalya, RT Nagar, Bengaluru. Her friendly smile and assurance have set many people, who had vaccine hesitancy at ease.

Lakshmi comes all the way from Doddaballapur to the PHC to ensure that she is on time and that people are not kept waiting. She leaves home at 7.30 am and returns around 6.30 pm every day. The young nurse, who was appointed in March last year, had Covid-19 testing as her maiden task at the PHC. She had tested positive in October last year and her child had also developed symptoms. P4

Police must show restraint, citizens too should follow Covid norms: HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court on Monday said that the police should be more restrained in wielding their lathis while enforcing lockdown norms and also behave courteously and patiently with citizens. The latter should also cooperate with law enforcement agencies to prevent the spread of Covid-19, the High Court noted.

When the court's attention was drawn by the counsel for the petitioners to the alleged police excesses on citizens, for allegedly violating lockdown norms, the court observed that ultimately, the police should strike a balance by showing restraint in using lathis and the citizens should also cooperate with the police in implementing the norms. A division bench of Chief Justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka and Justice Aravind Kumar made this observation while referring to an order passed last year on a similar issue. Meanwhile, Advocate General Prabhuling K Navadagi assured the court that he will immediately take up the issue with the state police chief.

EXPRESS READ

Three LeT terrorists killed in J&K encounter

Srinagar: Three Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, police sources said.

Moody's cuts India's growth forecast to 9.3 pc

New Delhi: Moody's Investors Service on Tuesday slashed India's growth forecast for the current financial year to 9.3 per cent saying the second Covid wave hampers economic recovery.